

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: EEC, BE

SUBJ: BELGIAN PLANS FOR THE EC COUNCIL PRESIDENCY

1. JUNE 24 SEVERAL MEMBERS OF USEC STAFF AND I HAD LUNCH WITH BELGIAN PERM REP TO EC, AMBASSADOR VAN DER MEULEN, AND KEY MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF TO REVIEW BELGIAN PRIORITIES FOR THEIR EC PRESIDENCY BEGINNING JULY 1, IMPORTANCE OF CLOSE CONTACTS BETWEEN OUR MISSIONS DURING THAT PERIOD, AND CURRENT ISSUES IN US-EC RELATIONS.

2. VAN DER MEULEN CONFIRMED ACCURACY OF PRESS ACCOUNTS OF JUNE 22 MEETING BETWEEN EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT JENKINS AND BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET, IN WHICH BROAD AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN COMMISSION AND INCOMING COUNCIL PRESIDENT ON PRIORITIES FOR NEXT SIX MONTHS. THERE APPEALED TO BE GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT PRIORITIES WILL BE:

(A) EC INTERNAL POLICY.

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(I) SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH. ACTIONS MUST BE TAKEN TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT. COMMUNITY FINANCIAL RESOURCES, AND IF NEED BE INSTITUTIONALITIES, MUST BE INCREASED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

(II) STRUCTURAL REFORM IN INDUSTRY. THERE MUST BE

STRUCTURAL REFORM IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR--E.G., SHIPYARDS, STEEL, AND TEXTILES.

(III) ENERGY. A COHERENT COMMUNITY ENERGY PROGRAM MUST BE DEVELOPED. THE COMMUNITY MUST DECIDE ON A SITE FOR THE JOINT EUROPEAN TORUS PROJECT AND ON FUTURE FUNDING OF THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTERS. IT SHOULD ALSO ADOPT GUIDELINES ON THE INCREASED USE OF COAL IN ENERGY GENERATION AND COMMON ENERGY SAVING STANDARDS.

(IV) FISHING. THE COMMUNITY MUST INCREASE ITS EFFORTS TO CONCLUDE AN INTERNAL FISHERIES REGIME.

(V) REGIONAL AND SOCIAL POLICY. THERE SHOULD BE COUNCIL ADOPTION OF A NEW REGIONAL FUND WITH INCREASED FINANCING AIMED AT AMELIORATING REGIONAL DIVERGENCES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL FUND TO SEE WHETHER IT SHOULD NOT BE INCREASED AS A WAY OF COMBATTING UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT.

(VI) FINANCING COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. THE EC SHOULD OVERCOME REMAINING OBSTACLES TO INITIATING FUNDING OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES FROM THE EC'S OWN BUDGET BEGINNING IN 1978.

(B) EXTERNAL POLICY.
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(I) TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. THE COMMUNITY SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRESS IN THE TOKYO ROUND, AND GENERALLY WORK TO COMBAT PROTECTIONISM.

(II) EC REPRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS (E.G., IN ENERGY FIELD, PARTICULARLY ON NUCLEAR MATTERS). COMMISSION AND BELGIAN PRESIDENCY WILL WORK TO ENSURE A COMMUNITY ROLE IN ANY SUCH NEGOTIATIONS. (NOT SURPRISINGLY, AMBASSADOR VAN DER MEULEN UNDERLINED THE CONTINUING INTEREST OF BELGIUM IN PUSHING FOR A COMMUNITY ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION OF ANY SUBJECT AFFECTING THE INTERESTS OF EC MEMBER COUNTRIES.

3. VAN DER MEULEN AND HIS STAFF SAID THAT WHEN SIMONET OUTLINES TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON JULY 6 BELGIUM'S PRIORITIES FOR THE PRESIDENCY (THEY NOTED THAT HIS SPEECH HAS NOT YET BEEN WRITTEN, BUT IMPLIED THEY WOULD HAVE A LARGE INPUT), HE WILL EMPHASIZE THAT: (A) ALL COMMUNITY POLICIES AND INITIATIVES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE MUST BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF, AND WITH DUE CONSIDERATION FOR THEIR IMPACT ON, THE TWO MOST

SIGNIFICANT NEW ISSUES FACING THE COMMUNITY--I.E., EC
ENLARGEMENT AND THE MOVE TOWARD DIRECT ELECTIONS OF THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT; AND (B) DESPITE PREMATURE OBITUARIES
IN SOME QUARTERS, THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CON-
SIDER THE TINDEMANS REPORT DEAD AND THE BELGIANS WILL
HAVE THE REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN MIND AS MHEY CONDUCT
THEIR PRESIDENCY. (A MEMBER OF VAN DER MEULEN'S STAFF
INDICATED THAT THE BELGIAN PERM DEL HAD DISCUSSED THE
FORTHCOMING BELGIAN PRESIDENCY WITH PRIME MINISTER
TINDEMANS EARLIER ON JUNE 24 AND HAD RECEIVED THE PRIME
MINISTER'S ASSENT TO THIS GENERAL BELGIAN APPROACH DURING
THEIR PRESIDENCY.) MORRIS

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